

Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services (FNCS) Mission Area Strategic Plan

FNCS

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Introduction

The Nutrition and Consumer Services (FNCS) mission area, composed of the Food and Consumer Service (FCS) and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP), is responsible for ensuring that all Americans have access to healthful diets and nutrition information. We accomplish this by providing nutrition assistance to needy families; school-age children; and women, infants, and children at nutritional risk. We make available nutrition education and information to all Americans, and provide health referrals to certain program participants.

FNCS sponsors and supports research aimed at improving the nutritional quality of diets consumed not only by the participants of our programs, but by all Americans.

We strive to enhance the public's confidence in our programs by ensuring the efficiency, integrity, and fairness of our programs. We will promote results-driven and accountable management of all our programs.

The following FCS and CNPP strategic plans present the goals, objectives, and activities undertaken by the FNCS Mission Area to improve the nutritional well-being of all Americans.



Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) Strategic Plan

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Introduction

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) was established in December 1994 as a result of the reorganization of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). CNPP strives to further the Department's goal of attaining a healthy and well-nourished population by serving as the focal point within USDA for linking scientific research to dietary needs of the American consumer. CNPP develops integrated nutrition research, education, and promotion programs, and is a recognized authority for providing science-based food and nutrition guidance for the American public as well as assisting policymakers to devise strategies for cost-effective food assistance and nutrition interventions. The Center leverages its small staff of 32 FTEs by working effectively with policymakers, academic professionals, media, and other information multipliers toward improving the diet and health of the American public.

Contributing to improvement of the American diet is very important because in 4 of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States, a poor quality of diet and lack of physical activity are significant contributing factors. Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes account for 1.4 million deaths annually as well as impair quality of life and result in lost productivity. Diet also adversely influences such disorders as obesity, hypertension, and osteoporosis. Altogether, diet-linked diseases account for an estimated \$250 billion each year in increased medical cost and lost productivity.

The Center is a component of Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS), which focuses on developing and promoting dietary guidance to all Americans. CNPP's role is to define, coordinate, and strengthen nutrition education policy within USDA, and to translate nutrition research into easy-to-follow information and materials for the benefit of health professionals, consumers, academics, policymakers, and people in the private sector.

The mission and goal of the Center are implicitly authorized by the Organic Act of May 15, 1863, and the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990.

Key External Factors

Developments in medical and scientific knowledge regarding diet and health, as well as changes in human nutrition standards, food consumption, food composition, and food marketing, can profoundly impact CNPP's strategic plan for accomplishing its mission of linking scientific research to consumers. For example, changes in Recommended Dietary Allowances for essential micronutrients could affect the recommendation of CNPP's Food Guide Pyramid, the popular and widely recognized guide to daily food choices. In addition, because the Center depends on data collected by national surveys, such as the Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals conducted by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Consumer Expenditure Survey at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and food supply data collected by the Economic Research Service (ERS), the work of CNPP will be greatly affected if the results from these surveys were not available in a timely fashion.

Mission

The mission of the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion is to improve the nutritional status of Americans by serving as the focal point within the United States Department of Agriculture for linking scientific research to the consumer.

As a recognized authority in this field, CNPP provides food and nutrition guidance based on current scientific research to the American public, policy makers, and professional and media multipliers in furtherance of the ultimate goal of improving the diet and health of all Americans.

Goals

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Goal 1**Improved nutritional status of Americans**

CNPP contributes to the Departmental objective, “Improve dietary practices and promote a healthy well- nourished population through nutrition education and research” by providing scientifically based food and nutrition guidance and helping to formulate sound policy, including the release of *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

■ Objective 1.1**Advance food and nutrition guidance.**

The National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5341) requires the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services (DHHS) to jointly publish every 5 years the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The *Dietary Guidelines* provide the latest scientific advice for healthy Americans age 2 years and over about food choices that promote health and prevent disease. The *Dietary Guidelines* are the cornerstone of Federal nutrition policy. The next edition of the *Dietary Guidelines* is due by December 2000. CNPP serves as Co-Executive Secretary for developing the *Dietary Guidelines* and is the leading Federal unit responsible for producing and promoting the *Dietary Guidelines* expressed in the consumer bulletin: *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

USDA also has a rich history of producing food guides for consumers. The current food guide is graphically illustrated by the *Food Guide Pyramid*. The *Pyramid* illustrates USDA’s research-based food guidance system that translates nutrient recommendations into recommendations on food intakes and provides a framework for selecting the kinds and amounts of foods to provide a nutritionally adequate diet. Adapting the *Food Guide Pyramid* for specific audiences and uses and ensuring that the food pattern recommendations continue to be scientifically sound, appropriate, and useful to the public are critical on-going requirements.

Time Frame for Completion

Advancing food and nutrition guidance is a continual activity that evolves with changes in medical and scientific knowledge, human nutrition recommendations, food consumption, food composition, new food technologies, and food marketing. The next edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* will be released in the year 2000.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Serve as a Co-Executive Secretary with the Agricultural Research Service for the USDA/DHHS Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.
- Prepare, publish, and promote the bulletin: *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Adapt the *Food Guide Pyramid* for specific audiences and uses, including for young children and for balanced weight control.
- Maintain the scientific research base supporting the *Food Guide Pyramid*.
- Translate emerging medical and scientific research into easy-to-understand food guidance for consumers, nutrition professionals, and the media.

Performance Measures

- Performance will be measured by the timely release of *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* as required by law, which reflects the preponderance of scientific and medical knowledge. The *Dietary Guidelines* will help Americans to improve their nutritional status.
- Awareness of guidelines and the extent to which consumers follow the recommendations; adaptation of the *Food Guide Pyramid* for specific audiences to improve their nutritional status.
- Use of CNPP's food and nutrition guidance by intermediary groups and information multipliers (e.g., policymakers, nutrition educators, nutrition programs directors, the media).

■ Objective 1.2**Effectively promote food and nutrition guidance for all Americans.**

CNPP plans to promote food and nutrition guidance by working with intermediary groups, information multipliers, influence agents, nutrition educators, the media and others to develop and deliver consumer-based messages and materials for all Americans, including food assistance program participants.

Time Frame for Completion

Effective promotion of food and nutrition guidance is a continual activity that depends heavily on the availability of resources to conduct consumer research and design and develop state-of-the-art nutrition education messages and materials.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Establish dietary behavior benchmarks and determine key behaviors and behavior models for targeted subpopulations to translate the *Dietary Guidelines* into actions that improve dietary patterns.
- Complete and report consumer research to guide the development of a targeted nutrition promotion initiative.
- Develop collaborative partnerships for developing and delivering nutrition promotion messages and materials that leverage limited CNPP resources.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate a targeted nutrition promotion initiative in tandem with the release of the next edition of the *Dietary Guidelines*.

Performance Measures

- The number of Americans following the *Dietary Guidelines* as measured by *The Healthy Eating Index*—a measure of overall quality of the American diet that is calculated from survey data.
- Changes over time; the number of Americans aware of and following the *Food Guide Pyramid*; development, implementation, and evaluation of a targeted nutrition promotion initiative in tandem with the release of the fifth edition of the *Dietary Guidelines* in the year 2000. These parameters are measured through national surveys.

■ Objective 1.3

Contribute to improved nutrition policy formulation.

CNPP will continue to improve nutrition policy formulation through ongoing applied research and timely analyses of food consumption and dietary behavior of Americans, and by assessments of the nutritional status of Americans. CNPP will continue to provide Departmental leadership in food security policy and World Food Summit follow-up activities. In addition, CNPP will support policymaking by developing data and nutritional indicators, conducting research, and analyzing alternative policy and program approaches for improving the nutritional status of Americans, including participants in the food assistance programs.

Time Frame for Completion

Conducting the applied research to provide insightful and timely nutrition policy analysis is an ongoing activity.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Conduct data analysis pertinent to USDA's nutrition policy and programs.
- Update food plans used in food assistance and related nutrition programs.
- Refine measures of overall dietary quality.
- In cooperation with other partners, complete U.S. Action Plan for Food Security.
- Prepare *Dietary Guidelines 2000 Base Book* that includes reviews of dietary guidance and nutrition policies, and Nutrition Insights fact sheets.

Performance Measures

- Performance will be measured by the extent of use of CNPP's expertise and analysis by policymakers regarding the dietary behavior of Americans and their nutritional status.
- Assessment of use of *The Healthy Eating Index*, *Nutrient Content of the U.S. Food Supply*, and *Thrifty Food Plan*.
- The number of citations of articles by other professionals, including academics and private sector authorities.
- The use of *The Healthy Eating Index* by professionals to track improvements in the American diet assessed by tracking citations.
- The use of CNPP *Nutrition Insights* by government policymakers, academic professionals, media, and other information multipliers in their deliberations and for general nutrition information.

■ Objective 1.4

Enhance efficiency of developing food and nutrition guidance materials for the American public, including food assistance recipients.

CNPP facilitates and coordinates the nutrition promotion activities that are carried out by a number of agencies within USDA and DHHS. CNPP also fosters public/private partnerships to leverage its limited resources.

Time Frame for Completion

Tasks and activities conducted on a continuing basis.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Represent FNCS mission area as a member of the Interagency Board on Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research.
- Chair the USDA Dietary Guidance Working Group that reviews the USDA and HHS publications and other materials to ensure consistency with the *Dietary Guidelines*.
- Coordinate the nutrition education task force with representatives from other parts of the USDA.
- Establish and maintain USDA/public/private partnerships such as the Dietary Guidelines Alliance.

Performance Measures

- Performance will be measured by ensuring that all nutrition education materials for the general public produced by the Federal Government are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines* and are released in a timely fashion.
- Effectiveness of the materials will be monitored through surveys and focus groups.

■ **Objective 1.5****Improved measures for consumer expenditures and cost analysis.**

CNPP strives to improve nutrition policy formulation for children and other vulnerable groups by conducting timely analyses of food cost and other household expenditures, and their impact on relevant public policies such as the *Thrifty Food Plan* and welfare reform. CNPP assesses nutrition interventions and related policies.

Time Frame for Completion

These analytical activities are ongoing. For example, the cost of the *Thrifty Food Plan* is revised on a monthly basis and the journal, *Family Economics and Nutrition Review*, is published four times a year.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Estimate expenditures on children by families.
- Examine food and other expenditures of vulnerable groups.
- Examine welfare reform implications for food expenditures, nutritional status, and child support.

Performance Measures

- The number of States that use the Annual Report on *Expenditures on Children by Families* and courts in setting child support and foster care payments.
- Journal articles on food and other expenditures of vulnerable groups are cited by professionals and media.
- *Family Economics and Nutrition Review*, containing articles related to food and other expenditures of vulnerable groups, meets the needs of journal customers as determined by focus groups and a reader survey.

Management Initiatives

CNPP has drafted a 5-year Information Resource Management (IRM) Plan for optimizing existing computing systems and to incorporate new technologies. CNPP has a multi-disciplinary staff comprised of nutritionists, economists, food scientists, and other professionals, many of whom have to complete training courses to fulfill continuing education requirements for continued certification of credentials and professional advancement. CNPP recognizes that attracting and retaining a high-caliber staff is fundamental to fulfilling its mission and accomplishing its strategic goal. CNPP plans to develop, implement, and evaluate an annual individual development plan (IDP) for each staff person, closely tied to CNPP's annual performance reviews. CNPP is totally committed to continually improving the quality, effectiveness, and diversity of its workforce, and to implementing Federal laws and USDA's policies on Civil Rights.

Time Frame for Completion

The 5-year IRM Plan will be implemented by the year 2000. The individual development plans will be developed in collaboration between staff and management for each staff member annually as part of the annual performance review. The Center will conduct periodic training on Civil Rights and sensitization to diversity.

Strategies for Achieving the Management Initiative

- Effect the migration of the UNIX system to USDA standard platform and upgrade the existing system.
- Develop IDP program and provide guidance to staff and management; develop individual IDPs; evaluate individual IDPs and overall IDP effort.
- Continually improve the diversity of CNPP workforce.

Performance Measures

- Number of CNPP staff who obtain, retain, and/or advance professional certification and fulfill continuing education requirements.
- Compliance with USDA standards for procurement, installation, and security of computer systems.
- Extent of diversity of the workforce.

Partnerships and Coordination

To leverage Government resources and cost-effectively amplify nutrition guidance, the Center maintains strong ties with many Federal agencies, food industry, academic institutions, professional organizations, and a variety of other groups (including health and public interest organizations) to promote a healthful diet for Americans. Within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, CNPP works with numerous partner agencies, including the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), the Economic Research Service (ERS), the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the Food and Consumer Service (FCS), the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Positioned as it is within the mission area of Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, the Center serves uniquely as a liaison between the Department's research and extension capacity and nutrition and food assistance policy and program implementation. In addition, the multi-disciplinary Center staff link with other governmental agencies (e.g., Centers for Disease Control, Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration), and the private sector through mechanisms such as public/private partnerships (for example, the

Dietary Guidelines Alliance) and the Domestic Subgroup on Food Security of the Inter-Agency Working Group, World Food Summit.

CNPP shared its strategic plan with these Federal agencies and other organizations mentioned above. The specific suggestions received from these groups were incorporated in the final draft.

Linkage of Goals to Annual Performance Plan

CNPP's annual performance plan for fiscal year 1999 contains five objectives that parallel the five objectives in the Center's strategic plan. The performance goals reflect the planned accomplishment of specific projects in fulfillment of CNPP's mission and in furtherance of its general goal. CNPP plans to devote more attention to the development of outcome measures as a key part of its first annual performance plan. In particular, CNPP plans to develop and report baseline measures, interim measures, and targeted performance goals for future outcome measures. CNPP's goal is linked to the budget program activity of nutrition promotion and nutrition policy and analysis.

Resources Needed

The most important component of analysis, data development, and communication performed by CNPP is the need for a critical mass of highly trained and experienced professional staff. The Center staff currently consists of 12 Ph.D.s, and an equal number of Masters trained in nutrition, economics, and food science. In addition, office, communication and computer support personnel number approximately 8. To realize their potential, this staff requires access to sufficient computing capacity, software, and research materials. Accordingly, it is essential that the Center update its UNIX computer platform, which will be obsolete in the next 2 years. A technically up-to-date personal computer network with the capacity to process and statistically analyze large data sets enables the Center to transform data into information usable by policy makers and others. Additionally, the Center requires sufficient travel funds to support professional staff who conduct Center business by attending research conferences and work with professional colleagues at Universities. The current level of funding is inadequate to fully support the activities of the Center. Public and private partnerships have become necessary to leverage these resources.

Program Evaluation

CNPP has used the data from national food surveys such as the Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals (CSFII) conducted by USDA to monitor changes in the diet quality of Americans. The analysis of data from these and other surveys was used to evaluate our programs and policies. The resulted evaluation of prior strategies formed the basis for developing new strategies under the strategic plan.

The impact of programs and policies developed by the Center will be evaluated by assessing the outcomes and outputs resulting from its initiatives. Internal agency procedures will be used to track specific output measures, such as the timely release of revisions to the *Dietary Guidelines*. As established in its annual performance plan for fiscal year 1999, CNPP plans to develop specific outcome measures, including baseline and target measures, to evaluate the impact of each objective and the goal. CNPP anticipates using *The Healthy Eating Index* as a major indicator to monitor changes in the dietary behavior of Americans. In addition, results of consumer focus groups and surveys of our clients will also provide indicators of achievement of CNPP's objectives. CNPP's ability to conduct rigorous program evaluations will, of course, be subject to availability of funds.

Role of External Entities

In the preparation of this plan, CNPP sought input from a wide range of agencies and institutions both from within and outside Government. These institutions include professional, private sector, and consumer groups as well as Federal and State government agencies involved in food and nutrition issues. CNPP has incorporated many of the comments received from these groups. In addition, CNPP's Nutrition Promotion Staff convened a panel of leading nutrition educators to advise in developing the nutrition promotion section of this strategic plan. However, the plan was prepared by CNPP staff.

Food and Consumer Service (FCS) Strategic Plan



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Introduction

The mission of the Food and Consumer Service (FCS) is to provide children and needy families access to a more healthful diet through its food assistance programs and comprehensive nutrition education efforts. FCS food assistance programs account for over one-half of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) budget.

The goals in this plan support the Department's theme relating to alleviating hunger and the management initiatives support the Department's management initiatives. The plan was developed solely by FCS staff without assistance from outside consultants or contractors.

Nutrition Assistance Programs

FCS nutrition assistance programs work both individually and in concert with one another to alleviate food insecurity and promote healthier diets for children and low-income adults and improve nutritional knowledge among all Americans. While each program is targeted at populations with specific nutrition needs, many of these needs are related, resulting in individuals or households participating in more than one program. Taken together, these programs provide a nutrition safety net for low-income Americans. Brief program descriptions are given below:

Food Stamp Program

FCS' largest program is the Food Stamp Program (FSP), which is the primary source of nutrition assistance for low-income Americans. FSP enables eligible households to improve their diet by increasing their food purchasing power. The States administer the program through a Federal-State partnership. The Federal Government pays for the full cost of benefits and about one-half of the States' administrative costs.

Child Nutrition Programs

Child Nutrition Programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Special Milk Program (SMP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Nutrition Education and Training (NET) program. These programs assist State and local governments in providing healthful, nutritious meals to children in public and non-profit private schools, child care institutions, certain adult day care centers, and summer recreation programs.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

The WIC Program is designed to improve the health of nutritionally at-risk, low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women and infants and children up to 5 years of age. WIC provides participants with supplemental food packages, nutrition education, and referrals to health and social services.

Commodity Assistance Programs

These programs provide commodities for soup kitchens, food banks, and emergency feeding organizations. They also provide food packages to targeted groups including those similar to the WIC program participants as well as Native Americans living on Indian reservations and low-income elderly persons.

The External Environment

Food Donation Programs for Selected Groups

Two programs are included. The first is the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, which is an alternative to the Food Stamp Program. The second is the Nutrition Program for the Elderly which provides cash and commodities to States for distribution to local organizations that prepare meals served to the elderly in congregate settings or delivered to their homes.

FCS administers its programs in an environment that includes Congress; other agencies within USDA; other Federal agencies; State, Territorial, Indian tribal, and local governments; advocacy groups; and, of course, program participants. The relationships are dynamic, changing as the Federal and State roles change.

The agency works closely with other agencies within the Department in many areas. In order to meet the nutrition education objectives, FCS will need the cooperation of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP). ARS' cooperation will be needed to develop techniques to determine food composition, maintain national food composition databases, monitor the food and nutrient consumption and nutrition knowledge of the U.S. population, and develop and transfer effective nutrition education strategies. CSREES cooperation will be needed to educate children and families to improve food choices. AMS will help to improve the nutritional profile of commodities purchased for Federal feeding programs. This includes developing, testing, and packaging new products. FSIS assistance will focus on food safety education for FCS feeding programs. CNPP will coordinate nutrition education and promotion throughout the Department.

FCS programs are closely tied to other Federal Government programs, particularly those that provide income assistance and nutrition services to low-income populations. For example, FCS also works with the nutrition components of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), particularly the Administration on Aging, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Physical Activity and Nutrition.

In the past, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was the most important non-USDA program with which FCS coordinated. Others, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Unemployment Insurance, also play significant roles in FCS programs. They may affect the participation in and benefits received from FCS programs. Recent welfare reform legislation will change this relationship in ways that are difficult to predict. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (welfare reform) modified the eligibility criteria for food stamp benefits and increased State design options that also can affect benefits for recipients. However, it did not affect the overall mission to provide food and nutrition security for low-income Americans participating in the FSP.

Although the major thrust of the agency's programs is to provide nutrition assistance to low-income groups, FCS has taken steps to reach all Americans through nutrition education as exemplified by its School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children and its supporting program, Team Nutrition. In addition, FCS has worked closely with the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion and HHS to update the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which is designed for use by the entire U. S. population. The State agencies administer FCS nutrition assistance programs through a Federal-State partnership.

Role of External Entities

FCS has incorporated the needs and viewpoints of its customers into this strategic plan. The perspectives, knowledge, and experiences of public and private organizations with an interest in FCS programs were taken into account in the development of the plan.

FCS has held hearings, analyzed public comments, conducted surveys, and held meetings with many of the agency's customers on the direction and operations of its programs. For example, FCS solicited input from government organizations and advocacy and food industry/retailer groups on ways to improve program effectiveness and efficiency. The agency has conducted surveys of program administrators, participants, food retailers and financial institutions to obtain information on their satisfaction with FCS programs and how they can be improved.

To promote the Federal/State partnership, FCS meets regularly with cooperators and State agencies. For example, the agency meets quarterly with the American Public Welfare Association and State agencies administering the Food Stamp Program to solicit feedback and ideas for streamlining and improving program operations. The agency also meets with FSP and WIC directors, quality control directors, advocacy groups, and other groups of partners.

FCS actively engages its partners and the public in the development and improvement of its programs. For example, the agency created a network of public and private partnerships designed to promote healthy food choices among the Nation's school children. FCS entered into agreements with other Federal agencies and private sector organizations to expand and promote nutrition education.

From its regularly held public forums FCS has learned how valuable the observations and recommendations of the public can be. The agency intends to continue to seek direct public input on its programs in order to improve nutrition assistance programs throughout the Nation.

In its continuing effort to incorporate the views of its partners and the public in the development of this plan, FCS held a public forum to obtain comments on the plan from any interested party. Over 60 organizations were invited to the forum. At the same time, FCS made the plan available on the agency's World Wide Web site. As a result of these activities, FCS received comments from numerous organizations which were considered in the development of the plan's objectives, activities, and performance measures.

Mission

The mission of FCS is to provide children and needy families better access to food and a more healthful diet through its food assistance programs and comprehensive nutrition education efforts.

Goals

Goal 1

Enhanced food and nutrition security for low-income Americans

This goal reflects the mission of the Food Stamp Program (FSP), the largest food assistance program operated by the Food and Consumer Service. This goal represents both the continuation of the program's traditional role in providing food assistance as well as improving program administration to meet future policy and fiscal challenges.

FSP's status as an entitlement program with standard eligibility and benefits remain its key features even after welfare reform.

■ Legislative Authority

Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended (P.L. 88-525)

■ Objective 1.1

Enhanced nutritional security and food purchasing power of low-income Americans participating in the FSP.

Time Frame for Completion

Ongoing

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Establish baselines and periodically reassess measures of households reporting poverty-linked hunger.
- Increase effectiveness of nutrition education funded by the Food Stamp Program by providing technical assistance to States and coordinating with the Extension Service and CNPP to develop a consensus model of effective Food Stamp Program nutrition education, including buying skills.

Performance Measures

- Prevalence of poverty-linked hunger.

Baseline: Results of 1996 Current Population Survey (when it becomes available)

Target: To be determined

■ Objective 1.2

Improved program integrity.

To accomplish this objective, FCS will need the assistance of the OIG in fulfilling management strategies to increase claims collections and reduce the incidence of fraudulent Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) transactions. Through ongoing audit activities, FCS needs OIG to do the following:

In the area of claims collections activities, identify management weaknesses in States' claims collection efforts and provide suggestions for improvements in this area.

In the area of EBT and retailer activities, provide assistance in coordinating retailer oversight and investigations, including better defining and targeting suspicious incidences of EBT transactions.

Time Frame for Completion

Ongoing

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Continue ongoing program responsibilities to monitor States' compliance with Federal law and regulations.
- Increase payment accuracy by providing technical assistance to States, implementing the Leland Act, and encouraging negotiated liability settlements.
- Increase claims collection by expanding use of all debt collection tools and providing technical assistance to States.
- Improve retailer integrity by developing a measurement system for retail

integrity, investigating suspicious stores, encouraging expanded use of false claim civil procedures, and making timely sanctions against violating stores.

Performance Measures

- Payment accuracy rate
Baseline: 90.28 percent (1995)
Target: 91.20 percent (2002)
- Percent of established claims collected
Baseline: 48 percent (1995)
Target: 58 percent (2002)
- Number of sanction actions taken against stores
Baseline: 1,400
Target: Maintain baseline

■ Objective 1.3

Improved program efficiency.

Time Frame for Completion

Ongoing

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Continue ongoing program responsibilities of developing and issuing regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the eligibility for and administration and operation of the FSP, including eligibility certification, EBT, and work programs.
- Expand implementation of EBT by providing technical assistance to States and encouraging more aggressive implementation.
- Provide technical assistance to States on a Simplified Food Stamp Program.
- Expand State administrative flexibility by issuing streamlining regulations on application processing, reporting changes in income, and the employment and training program.
- Develop more cost-effective, automated, electronic reporting systems for submission and maintenance of State-reported program data.

Performance Measures

- Number of States issuing benefits by EBT. Number of States that meet the statutory mandate to implement by October 1, 2002, unless waivers are granted based on unusual barriers to implementation.
Baseline: 11 States (1995)
Target: 53 States (2002)
- Percent of benefits issued by EBT
Baseline: 15% (1995)
Target: 100% (2002)
- CFR pages of prescriptive requirements
Baseline: 472 pages of requirements (1996 CFR)
Target: 30 % reduction (141 pages)

■ Linkage of Goal to Annual Performance Plan

Goal 1, Enhanced food and nutrition security for low-income Americans, consists of three strategic objectives. There are eight performance goals identified for fiscal year 1999 to help attain the goal and its component objectives. FCS derived the annual performance goals directly from the strategic plan after an analysis of what outcomes, activities, and outputs were needed to accomplish the strategic goal. Goal 1 is linked to the budget program activity of the Child Nutrition Program.

■ Resources Needed

FCS needs sufficient staff and travel resources at the National and Regional levels to ensure accuracy in the delivery of food stamp benefits, including quality control staff to monitor and assess States' effort in improving payment accuracy and providing technical assistance for error reduction. Additional staff are needed to develop and issue regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the eligibility for and administration and operation of the Food Stamp Program, including eligibility certification, benefit issuance and redemption, and program compliance. Headquarters staff conduct research and evaluation of the Program and/or its components, such as EBT, work programs, and nutrition education. The agency also requires financial resources for printing, storing, and distributing food coupons.

FCS needs funds for its share of State systems which qualify for Federal financial participation. The agency must train employees in carrying out their responsibilities for new initiatives and on streamlining and changing program requirements. Regional Office staff are needed to review and approve State plans of operations and to monitor their implementation.

Resources are also required to develop and maintain:

- a computer system to track food stamp retailers and their sales;
- related internal FCS automated systems, such as Food Stamp Program Integrated Information System (FSPIIS);
- the Store Tracking, Authorization, and Redemption system (STARS);
- the National Integrated Quality Control System (NIQCS); and
- the Anti-fraud Locator using EBT Retailer Transactions (ALERT) System.

■ Key External Factors Affecting Goal Achievement

Three key factors could significantly affect progress in FCS' efforts to achieve its objectives for the Food Stamp Program. First, because the Food Stamp Program is administered in partnership with the States, their choices and actions will have significant consequences for program operations. For example, in order for FCS to meet the program integrity objective, it is crucial that States continue their commitment to improving payment accuracy by reducing the error rates to qualifying levels for enhanced funding, settling outstanding liabilities through reinvestment in error reduction activities, and avoiding error rate liabilities. Similarly, State commitments to statewide implementation of EBT will be crucial to meeting the program efficiency objective.

Second, under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (welfare reform) of 1996, State agencies will have the opportunity to simplify Food Stamp Program requirements for a segment of their caseload to conform with the requirements of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The choices that States make in designing and implementing simplified programs can have significant effects on the agency's meeting both the program integrity and efficiency objectives.

Finally, the state of the Nation's economy will have a substantial effect on food and nutrition programs. In the past, the Food Stamp Program has automatically expanded during economic downturns and contracted as the economy improved.

■ Partnerships and Coordination

State welfare agencies are FCS's major partners in administering the Food Stamp Program and delivering benefits to eligible households. The States administer the program through a Federal-State partnership under which the Federal Government pays the full cost of the benefits and about one-half of the States' administrative costs. The National Association of Food Stamp Directors and the American Public Welfare Association cooperate with FCS to address problems facing the Program.

FCS cooperates with the USDA Extension Service in the development, production, and distribution of nutrition education materials. In order for FCS to achieve this goal, the Extension Service, land-grant universities, and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion must develop and distribute nutrition education materials, including those pertaining to buying skills. FCS cooperates with the Agricultural Research Service in conducting surveys of food intake by households and individuals participating in the Food Stamp Program. The agency works closely with the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to reduce fraud and abuse related to benefit issuance and redemption.

■ Program Evaluation

FCS is conducting several evaluations measuring achievement of Goal 1. The first of these studies measures the food security of American households. The Agency collected data on food security as part of the April 1995 and September 1996 Current Population Survey (CPS). A third round was collected in April 1997. The agency also conducted a nationally representative survey of Food Stamp Program participants and other low-income Americans in April 1996. Among other information, the survey collected data on food security, client access to food retailers, food expenditures, and food use. These data will be used to estimate the prevalence of hunger in America and serve as a baseline against which future estimates can be compared. FCS also plans to model the effects of program participation on dietary intake using current data from the Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals.

Objective 3 under this goal is to increase program efficiency. Partially as a result of past research, the agency has determined that one of the primary strategies to increase program efficiency will be nationwide implementation of EBT. FCS has completed several exhaustive evaluations of the feasibility and impact of EBT on the Food Stamp Program. Among these were evaluations of food retailer readiness for EBT, potential impact of hybrid EBT systems, EBT commercial infrastructures and their implications for EBT, and EBT privacy issues. These and other studies indicated that EBT can bring substantial benefits to the Food Stamp Program and program participants. Therefore, one of the intermediate measures of program efficiency will be the extent of EBT implementation.

Another primary objective of the Food Stamp Program is program integrity. The agency has conducted several evaluations focusing on different dimensions of this objective. One important dimension of program integrity that the Food Stamp Program will be emphasizing is client integrity. FCS has two measures of this: payment accuracy and claims collection. The agency has conducted demonstrations on income and eligibility verification in two States. This information will be used to assist FCS in assessing its ability to improve its performance on these measures.

Goal 2

Healthful diets for school-age children

This goal reflects the agency's recognition of its national health and education responsibilities for school-age children. To fulfill its commitment to making the promise of healthy children a reality, FCS developed the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children. The School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children is a historic policy change that requires school meal programs to update their standards in line with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in order to provide nutritious, healthful meals and to contribute to the nutrition education of the Nation's schoolchildren. By improving children's nutritional status, the agency will contribute directly to their health and education, thereby meeting its responsibility to the Nation's children.

The two major programs serving this goal are the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). These two programs provide nutritious meals to about 25 million children each school day and account for a significant portion of their nutrient intake.

■ Legislative Authority

National School Lunch Act of 1946, as amended (P.L. 79-396)
Child Nutrition Act of 1966, as amended (P.L. 89-742)

■ Objective 2.1

Ensure that school meals are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the Recommended Daily Allowances (RDAs).

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated time for completing this objective is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Maintain a network of public and private partnerships.
- Provide access to state-of-the-art nutrition information including Healthy School Meals training materials containing guidance on menu planning, food safety, and food purchasing specifications, and provide readily available experts to give customized nutrition information on request.
- Conduct School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children training sessions.
- Expand the number of food items and update existing items in the National Nutrient Data Base for Child Nutrition Programs.
- Establish the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children monitoring system.
- Develop and implement a methodology to conduct a national assessment of schools' progress in meeting nutrition standards.

Performance Measures

- Rolling average of the percent of School Food Authorities (SFAs) in a review cycle that meet the *Dietary Guidelines* and the RDAs

Baseline: Average percent of SFAs in the first review year that meet the *Dietary Guidelines* and RDAs

Target: A 25-percent increase over the baseline number

- Average nutrient content of school meals
 - Baseline (NSLP):** 38 percent calories from total fat
(1993) 15 percent calories from saturated fat
Calories meet 33% RDA
Vitamins & minerals meet 33% RDA
 - Baseline (SBP):** 31 percent calories from total fat
(1993) 14 percent calories from saturated fat
Calories are 24% RDA
Except for zinc, vitamins & minerals meet 33% RDA
 - Targets:** 30 percent calories from total fat
(2002) 10 percent calories from saturated fat
Calories – maintain NSLP baseline; increase to 25%
RDA for SBP
Vitamins & minerals – maintain baseline

■ Objective 2.2

Children make food choices for a healthy diet.

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated time for completion is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Increase the State nutrition education activities by administering the Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program, planning national meetings, expanding technical assistance and support to States for nutrition education, and maintaining support of Food Nutrition Information Center information sharing efforts to State and local agencies.
- Increase nutrition education marketing and the number of resource materials available through: the establishment and maintenance of nutrition education partnerships; the development and distribution of nutrition education materials to teachers, children, families, and the community; and development and improvement of mass communications.

Performance Measures

- Percent of school-age children with diets consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines* and the RDAs
 - Baseline:** 22 percent of children meet total fat guideline
(1993) 16 percent of children meet saturated fat guideline
At least 50 percent of children meet each vitamin & mineral RDA
Average food energy intake: 111 percent of RDA
 - Targets:** 24 percent of children meet total fat guideline
(2002) 18 percent of children meet saturated fat guideline
Maintain baseline for vitamin & mineral RDAs
Average food energy intake: 100 percent of RDA

■ Objective 2.3

Improved program integrity.

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated time for completion is 5 years from established baseline.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Conduct on-going analysis of review data to identify problems and technical assistance and/or fiscal action needed to resolve these problems.
- Impose corrective actions to resolve audit findings or State reports.
- Develop and distribute guidance materials for counting and claiming activities.
- Revise State reporting mechanisms and provide technical assistance on their implementation.

Performance Measure

- Rolling average of the percent of SFAs reporting accurate meal counts

Baseline: Most recent average (1993-97) from Coordinated Reviews Effort (CRE) reviews by States, as of March 1997

Target: Increase baseline by 10 percent (2002)

■ Linkage of Goal to Annual Performance Plan

Performance goals included in the agency's Annual Performance Plan are derived directly from the strategic plan. Goal 2, Healthful diets for children, was broken down into three objectives. Five annual performance goals were identified for fiscal year 1999, representing the starting points for achieving this strategic goal. Annual performance goals in subsequent fiscal years will build on these initial goals until the strategic goal and objectives are met. Goal 2 is linked to the budget program activity of the Food Stamp Program.

■ Resources Needed

Achievement of this goal and its corresponding objectives requires staff at the National, Regional, and State levels. National staff are needed to plan, develop and oversee the administration of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs by the States and their school food authorities. Staff are also needed to develop, test, and evaluate new nutrition education and training/technical assistance initiatives. Regional Office staff are needed to manage and monitor child nutrition programs in their corresponding States.

FCS must also maintain a financial management system to issue letters of credit to States to reimburse them for the school meals they serve and to maintain records of expenditures for child nutrition programs. The agency will also be required to maintain a Child Nutrition Nutrient Data Base, currently managed by the Agricultural Research Service. Research funds will be needed in order to obtain national measures of the nutrient content of NSLP and SBP meals.

Resources are required to develop and maintain related internal FCS automated systems, such as the Special Nutrition Programs Integrated Information System (SNPIIS), which support program administration, and to underwrite the FCS share for any State systems which qualify for Federal financial participation. Resources are also needed to train FCS employees in carrying out their responsibilities for initiatives in the above areas, as streamlining and changing program requirements force the agency to continually evaluate how to most efficiently perform its work.

■ Key External Factors Affecting Goal Achievement

Recent welfare reform legislation will affect school nutrition programs, but the ramifications are yet unclear. There have been some indications that participation in the School Breakfast Program may be increasing as a result of the recent reforms. Moreover, recent legislation allowing States and school food authorities more leeway in meeting the *Dietary Guidelines* may affect the speed and extent to which the *Guidelines* are met.

■ Partnerships and Coordination

State education agencies administer the NLSP and SBP through local school food authorities. They are responsible for enrollment, supplying meals, and providing nutrition education. The American Food Service Association is a major partner in addressing current and emerging issues facing school feeding programs.

Within USDA, FCS cooperates with the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion and the Cooperative, State, Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) in developing and disseminating nutrition education materials. In addition, the agency cooperates with the Agricultural Research Service in developing and maintaining the National Nutrient Data Bank to assist schools in meeting mandated nutrition requirements for school meals.

■ Program Evaluation

FCS used current scientific knowledge to determine an appropriate measure of “healthful” diets, as stated in Goal 2. A growing scientific consensus believes that diets high in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and low in fiber increase the risk of heart and other chronic diseases. This information is applied to the American diet in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which sets standards for what constitutes a healthy diet for adults and schoolchildren. For example, guideline #4 states: “Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.” Therefore, FCS determined that “healthful” will be measured partially by the extent to which children’s diets meet the *Dietary Guidelines*. In addition, to remain healthy, children’s diets must meet the RDAs. Consequently, the measure of healthful diets was determined to be diets that meet both the RDAs and the *Dietary Guidelines*.

FCS contributes to children’s diets through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meals. In 1993, the School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study sponsored by FCS found that while NSLP and SBP meals, on average, provide the recommended levels of vitamins and minerals for students, they do not meet the *Dietary Guidelines*. These measurements will serve as the baseline against which future estimates can be compared.

Since this study, the agency changed the nutrition standards of program meals requiring that they conform to both the *Dietary Guidelines* and the RDAs. These nutrition standards and other implementation issues are in the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children regulation. The agency made conformance to these standards Objective 1 of Goal 2. The measurement of the nutrient content of school meals will be updated in school year 1997/98 to determine the amount of progress being made toward meeting these nutrition standards. The School Nutrition Study will provide these measurements which will be compared to the School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study baseline measurements.

One tool available to assist local school food authorities in meeting these nutrition standards in Objective 1 is Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP). NSMP is a

menu planning system that focuses on the extent to which menus meet RDAs and *Dietary Guidelines*. FCS is conducting an evaluation of a demonstration of NSMP that will describe operational procedures implemented, identify any problem areas, and examine the nutrient content of the meals offered. Knowing the effectiveness of NSMP will help the agency determine the usefulness of this tool in providing healthful meals to children. FCS is also examining the use of other tools and strategies to improve the nutrition of school meals in the School Meals Initiative Implementation Study which began in 1996.

Just as important as having healthy meal choices available to them, children must also have the knowledge and motivation to select the healthy choices offered. FCS has funded several studies and evaluations to determine the extent and type of nutrition education currently available to children. The agency has surveyed public schools to determine what traditional and nontraditional educational activities are available to students. The agency is currently conducting a follow-up national survey of schools to determine what other assistance or materials teachers and/or other educators wish to have in teaching nutrition and health promotion to students. Finally, FCS is conducting a census of all activities currently funded by the Nutrition Education and Training Program. This census will also provide information on nutrition education activities and collaborations with other Federal and State agencies.

Finally, related to nutrition education, FCS is conducting seven community projects which involve a set of nutrition education activities in the classroom, cafeteria, school, and community. Evaluation of these pilots assesses the implementation of the nutrition education and promotion activities in all seven communities and determines the impact in four communities. This education and promotion effort is expected to result in increased nutrition knowledge and healthy attitudes among schoolchildren, leading to healthy food choices among children (Objective #2).

The final outcome the agency wishes to achieve by improving school meals and the education of children is healthy diets among children. This will be measured using national surveys that include the dietary intake of schoolchildren, such as the Continuing Survey of Food Intake of Individuals (CSFII).

Lastly, FCS is cooperating with the U.S. Department of Education on the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study. This study will provide a comprehensive and reliable set of data that may be used to describe and understand children's preparation for school; key transitions during their educational careers; their experience in kindergarten, the primary, and elementary grades; and how their early experiences relate to their likelihood of succeeding in school. This study offers FCS the opportunity to examine nutritional status and dietary links to cognitive performance as well as possible links of participation in school nutrition programs to learning.

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Goal 3

Improved nutritional status and health of low-income women, infants and children (WIC program)

This goal directly reflects the mission of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) to improve the nutrition and health status of participants. The demonstrated, continuing success of the WIC program has always derived from the programs three basic components. WIC provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education to program participants. With nutrition status certification, individual nutrition counseling, and specific nutrition

classes, nutrition education has always been an important component of the program. This strategic goal and its objectives build on these components and particularly emphasize nutrition education.

The WIC program is not an entitlement program; it operates within a fixed grant level. Its funding has expanded substantially in recent years as a result of a long-standing bipartisan commitment to fully funding the program at a level which would allow all eligible women, infants, and children who wish to participate to do so. It is anticipated that the funding level provided in fiscal year 1998 will be established as the level associated with fully funding the program. Further, real increases in program funding beyond this level are not anticipated.

Consequently, program efficiency and integrity will substantially affect the number and category of eligible women, infants, and children receiving food and services. Program growth is due in part to higher appropriations which reflect appreciation of WIC's effectiveness. However, a substantial portion of the participation increase is attributable to the success of cost containment measures; reducing the average food cost per person enables WIC to reach more participants with the same funds. The most successful strategy has been competitive rebate contracts between State agencies and infant formula companies. Thus, the program efficiency and integrity objective will affect achievement of the overall the strategic goal.

■ Legislative Authority

Child Nutrition Act of 1966, as amended (P.L. 89-642)

■ Objective 3.1

Improved program efficiency and integrity.

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated time for completing this objective is 5 years.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Implement cost containment measures that minimize food costs.
- Assist States in allocating funds to ensure service to the maximum number of eligible population.
- Improve vendor selection and monitoring of vendor and participant eligibility.
- Promote State Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) systems.

Performance Measures

- Food cost per participant
Baseline: \$31.24 (1996)
Target: 10 percent below baseline amount, adjusted for inflation (2002)
- Average monthly participation rate
Baseline: 7.2 million (1996)
Target: 7.5 million (2002)
- Number of States issuing benefits by EBT
Baseline: 1 (1997)
Target: 8 (2002)

■ Objective 3.2

Improved dietary practices of participant women and children.

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated time required is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Develop nutrition education tools for WIC children.
- Promote breastfeeding of infants.
- Promote consumption of foods containing nutrients lacking in the diets of WIC women and children.
- Promote utilization of farmer's markets (Farmer's Market Nutrition Program).

Performance Measures

- Percent of women and children participants with diets consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines* and RDAs
Baseline: To be developed
Target: To be developed
- Incidence and duration of breastfeeding among WIC participants
Baseline: Incidence: 33-44 percent in hospital
Duration: Percent of mothers still breastfeeding after 3 months
Target: Incidence: 50-60 percent in hospital
(2002) Duration: 10 percent increase over baseline

■ Objective 3.3

Improved nutritional qualifications of State and local WIC staff.

Time Frame for Completion

Ongoing

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Promote upgrading the nutrition skills of State and local WIC staff.
- Work with cooperators to recruit and retain qualified nutritionists for the WIC program.
- Cooperate with 1890 Land-Grant universities to recruit more minority students in the nutrition and dietetic fields.
- Expand training opportunities for State and local WIC staff.

Performance Measure

- Nutrition credentials of WIC staff
Baseline: 48 percent Registered Dieticians (RD) or RD eligible (1994); 2 (1994) percent Registered Dietetic Technician (DTR)
Target: 50 percent RD or RD eligible; 4 percent DTR
(2002)

■ Objective 3.4

Improved health outcomes of program participants.

Time Frame for Completion

The time requirement is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Increase access to WIC services for the hard to reach, the employed, and rural participants.
- Promote use of nutritional risk criteria that increase the probability of certification of those most at risk and able to benefit from WIC.
- Promote co-location and one-stop health and nutrition services.
- Investigate unusually high rates of anemia among WIC-eligible population at select locations.
- Improve clinic protocols and documentation of nutritional risk.
- Promote breastfeeding.
- Promote immunization of WIC children.
- Promote coordination with Healthy Start, Head Start, and other health programs for the maternal and infant population.

Performance Measures

- Health status measures: infant mortality, birthweight, anemia, and immunization rates

Baseline: Infant mortality rate:	14.5 (AFDC proxy)
Incidence of low-birthweight:	8.1 percent (WIC)
Anemia (children):	16.4 percent (WIC)
Anemia (pregnant women):	8.6 percent (WIC)
Immunization rate:	DTP3+ (95%); OPV3 (88%) (total population).

Target: Maintain baselines for all measures.

■ Linkage of Goal to Annual Performance Plan

The Annual Performance Plan for Goal 3 was developed directly from the FCS strategic plan. The goal comprises four strategic objectives. These, in turn, served as the basis for developing the 10 annual performance goals for fiscal year 1999. Attainment of these 10 annual goals will be the first steps toward achieving the strategic goal and objectives. Annual performance goals in each ensuing fiscal year will bring the agency closer to meeting its strategic goal for the WIC program. Goal 3 is linked to the budget program activity of the Women, Infants, and Children Program.

■ Resources Needed

Like other major food assistance programs, WIC is administered by State and local agencies. As such, a major role for FCS is to monitor State operations to ensure program efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity. Headquarters staff are responsible for program planning, policy development and issuing program regulations. In addition, they are responsible for research and evaluation activities, as well as coordination with other Federal agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services. The agency maintains a computerized WIC vendor monitoring profile for States to use in monitoring and reporting on vendor management activities. Regional Office staff review and approve State administration and operation plans and directly monitor State and local operations.

FCS provides funds for food packages and administration of the program, including nutrition education and health care referrals. Administrative funds are allocated to States to cover the costs for certifying participant eligibility, food delivery and warehousing, vendor monitoring, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion, health care coordination and referral, drug abuse education, financial management, program integrity, systems development, and clinic operations.

The agency will require research resources in order to measure nutritional qualifications of State and local WIC staff and other program performance measures.

Resources are required to develop and maintain related internal FCS automated systems that support program administration in this area, and to underwrite the FCS share for any State systems which qualify for Federal financial participation. Resources are also needed to train FCS employees in carrying out their responsibilities for initiatives in the above areas, as streamlining and changing program requirements force the agency to continually evaluate how to most efficiently perform its work.

■ Key External Factors Affecting Goal Achievement

The ability of FCS to achieve these objectives will be affected by several factors. Because WIC is not an entitlement program, levels of funding are particularly important. Consequently, the extent and amount of future rebates will affect FCS' ability to meet its participation target. Rebates will also affect the extent to which the agency will be able to meet the target for food package costs.

In addition, the WIC program's goal achievement could be affected by potential legislative changes in the overall public health service structure and in changes in health provision that are occurring throughout the health care industry. These changes could affect those who participate in the program and the services they receive. Lastly, goal achievement will likely be affected by technological advances such as Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT).

■ Partnerships and Coordination

State health agencies are FCS's major partners in administering the WIC program. On Indian reservations the program is administered by Indian Tribal Organizations. Hospitals and the medical community support WIC breastfeeding activities. The Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies coalition continues its efforts. FCS also works closely with the National Association of WIC Directors (NAWD) to improve various aspects of the Program, e.g., increased breastfeeding of infants.

WIC cooperates with the Department of Health and Human Services' Maternal and Child Care Program. In addition, FCS collaborates with the National Center for Health Statistics in collecting health data through the National Maternal and Infant Health Survey. FCS works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify any nutrition and health risks for WIC participants, including defining and achieving mutual immunization goals.

■ Program Evaluation

The WIC program has three general categories of participants: women, infants, and children. Past research has measured the improved health outcomes of program participation for pregnant women. These improved health outcomes resulted in significant cost savings. In 1990, FCS issued a report stating that prenatal WIC participation was associated with substantial savings in Medicaid costs for newborns and their mothers during the first 60 days after birth in five States. Estimated savings in newborn Medicaid costs from birth through 60 days associated with prenatal WIC participation ranged from \$573 to \$744 per birth. The agency will keep improved health outcomes for

program participants as an objective in order to continue making progress on these measures. In addition, the agency will measure the health outcomes of the other two categories of program participants. FCS will use several currently available information sources to measure progress on this objective, such as the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey conducted by DHHS.

Another objective in this plan is to improve program efficiency. Recent analyses of the WIC program have focused on the impact of infant formula rebates in terms of cost savings. Based on the most recent infant participation and contract data, FCS estimates that the rebate for milk-based infant formula will average \$2.26 per can in fiscal year 1997. Total rebate revenues are projected to be about \$1,100 million. The rebate projection will support nearly 1.7 million participants, about 23 percent of the estimated average monthly caseload in fiscal year 1996. Given the significant savings involved, the agency will continue to use rebates as a cost containment strategy. In fiscal year 1997, the agency will also begin a study of program management issues such as vendor abuse and the loss of food funds in the program. This study will provide FCS insight into how these issues could affect program food costs.

The desired outcome of these and other efficiency strategies is to reduce the food costs per participant. Therefore, food costs per participant will be a measure of program performance on this objective. With reduced food costs per participant, the agency wishes both to administer an efficient program and also to increase its ability to serve more eligible non-participants. Therefore, the other measure of this objective is percentage of eligibles served.

Additional funds resulting from cost savings will allow the program to serve more eligibles. Another strategy to serve eligible non-participants will be to ensure that potential participants have access to the program. FCS is currently conducting several studies that examine issues of program access. One study focuses on the access needs of a specific target group in the WIC program—adolescents. The Geomapping study is examining the location of providers in several programs, including WIC, and their proximity to program participants.

One of the primary purposes of the WIC program is to improve the dietary practices of WIC participants through nutrition education and counseling. Currently, the agency is conducting several demonstrations examining the effectiveness and costs associated with different types of nutrition education. In providing the most effective nutrition education, it is important that WIC staff at service delivery sites have the necessary nutrition qualifications to give useful advice and counseling. Therefore, one agency objective focuses on improving the nutrition-related qualifications of WIC staff. Past measures of these qualifications have been collected in a national survey conducted by the Association of State and Territorial Public Health and Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND). This survey will be used for future measures.

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Goal 4

Improved nutritional status of children in day-care settings

FCS recognizes that over the last several decades, the provision of child care has become increasingly important to many families. Because an increasing number of children are spending more hours in child care, the meals provided in these programs are playing a larger role in the children's total dietary intake. Therefore, FCS has made improving the nutritional status of these children one of its major goals.

■ Legislative Authority

National School Lunch Act of 1946, as amended (P.L. 94-105)

■ Objective 4.1

Improved nutritional quality of Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meals.

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated completion date is Summer, 2001.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Establish baselines for CACFP meals.
- Implement nutrition education activities.
- Adapt appropriate nutrition education materials for use in child care centers and family day care homes.

Performance Measures

- Percent of CACFP centers serving meals that meet the *Dietary Guidelines* and the RDAs.

Baseline: Under development

Target: To be developed

■ Objective 4.2

Improved program integrity.

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated completion date is Summer, 2001.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Improve State screening of child care institutions/sponsors' applications.
- Improve program compliance through training.
- Improve State monitoring of institutions/sponsors.
- Improve program targeting to low-income providers and children.

Performance Measures

- Incidence of sponsor/site error and mismanagement

Baseline: To be developed

Target: To be developed

■ Objective 4.3

Improved program targeting to, and access by, low-income, pre-school children.

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated completion date is Summer, 1999.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Establish the baseline for program participation.
- Increase the proportion of low-income participants by publishing the interim tiering regulations.
- Train States on the new tiering system.
- Assess impact of tiering rule.

Performance Measure

- Percent of meal reimbursement funds going to funding daycare home providers serving low-income children

Baseline: Data from FCS-44 beginning in 1997

Target: Majority of resources going to providers serving low-income children.

■ Linkage of Goal to Performance Plan

FCS derived the annual performance goals for Goal 4 directly from the FCS strategic plan. For fiscal year 1999, the three strategic objectives are broken down into three annual performance goals. Each performance goal represents a starting point upon which future progress towards achieving the strategic goal and objectives will be based. Goal 4 is linked to the budget program activity of the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program.

■ Resources Needed

CACFP is administered by the FCS. FCS develops and issues program regulations and establishes policies and guidelines. The agency provides program and administrative funds to the States. FCS also monitors and evaluates program performance. Program staff are needed to develop program plans and administer CACFP at the national level. Financial management staff are needed to ensure proper distribution of program and administrative funds to the States.

The States designate agencies to accept State-level administrative responsibility for the program. These agencies administer the program directly or through sponsors or centers. Regional Office staff are responsible for direct monitoring of State program operations, review and approval of State plans, and reporting.

Additional research funding will be needed to obtain information on several of this goal's performance measures, such as the nutritional quality of CACFP meals.

Resources are required to develop and maintain related internal FCS automated systems that support program administration in this area, and to underwrite the FCS share for any State systems which qualify for Federal financial participation. Resources are also needed to train FCS employees in carrying out their responsibilities for initiatives in the above areas, as streamlining and changing program requirements force the agency to continually evaluate how to most efficiently perform its work.

■ Key External Factors Affecting Goal Achievement

Recent Federal reforms in welfare and child care may affect the number and types of children participating in CACFP. Changes include a new rate structure for family daycare home providers and new DHHS daycare subsidies. Welfare reform work requirements will also increase the demand for daycare for low-income households.

■ Partnerships and Coordination

FCS administers CACFP through State education or State health agencies. They are responsible for authorizing and certifying program sponsors and providers as well as monitoring program operations.

Within USDA, FCS works with the CSREES and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion to develop nutrition education materials to be used by daycare providers. The Food Safety and Inspection Service provides technical assistance on food safety issues.

The agency also coordinates its feeding activities with the Department of Health and Human Services.

■ Program Evaluation

FCS has previously conducted one national study of CACFP measuring meal quality, the first objective of this goal. The study concluded that a major CACFP strength was the nutritional quality of its meals, especially their nutrient density. The issue of nutritional quality of CACFP was also addressed in several smaller studies which again found that the program was important in providing half or more of the children's RDAs for many nutrients.

In 1993, the agency began a new national study of CACFP which will update the measure of the nutrient composition of CACFP meals and the nutritional composition of CACFP meals actually consumed by children while in child care. This study will be different from prior measurements in that it will measure both the RDAs and the *Dietary Guidelines* where appropriate. This study will provide the baseline against which future measures will be compared.

This study is also examining CACFP food preparers' awareness of basic principles expressed in the *Dietary Guidelines* and their food purchasing and meal preparation practices. As with Goal 2, the agency believes that nutrition knowledge on the part of food preparers will result in improved nutritional quality of the meals. Lastly, the study will measure the percent of low-income children participating in the program. This will update the prior measures of low-income participation needed for Objective 3.

In fiscal year 1997, FCS is mandated by Congress to begin a new study focusing on the CACFP family daycare homes (FDCHs) type of care. This study will measure the nutritional quality of meals provided in homes and the percent of low-income children participating in the homes. Both of these will provide updates to the 1993 study for FDCHs.

Goal 5

Low-income children consume nutritious lunches when school meals are not available

Goal 5 seeks to extend the Agency's commitment to low-income children during the summer time when school meals are not available. Like the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children goal, this goal reflects the agency's commitment to meeting its responsibility to ensure the health of children.

■ Legislative Authority

National School Lunch Act of 1946, as amended (P.L. 94-105)

■ Objective 5.1

Increased children's participation in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated date for completion is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Remove barriers to sponsors participation, particularly schools.

Performance Measure

- SFSP participation as a percent of NSLP free/reduced-price participation

Baseline: 15 percent (fiscal year 1996)

Target: 17 percent (2002)

■ Objective 5.2

Improved meal quality.

Time Frame for Completion

The date for completing this task is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Assess nutrition quality of meals in SFSP.

Performance Measure

- Baseline measures established for percent of providers serving meals consistent with *Dietary Guidelines* and RDAs

Baseline: Not available

Target: Baselines established

■ Objective 5.3

Increased program integrity among sponsors.

Time Frame for Completion

The time required is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Improve State ability to manage and monitor the program.
- Improve program monitoring.

Performance Measures

- Incidence of sponsor error and mismanagement

Baseline: To be developed

Target: To be developed

■ Linkage of Goal to Annual Performance Plan

Goal 5 and its three corresponding strategic objectives were the direct sources for developing the Annual Performance Plan. The three annual performance goals for fiscal year 1999 were derived directly from the strategic objectives and represent what

FCS plans to achieve this year in meeting the strategic goal. Goal 5 is linked to the budget program activity of the Summer Food Service Program.

■ Resources Needed

FCS Headquarters staff develop program regulations, establish policies and guidelines, and administer the Summer Food Service Program at the national level. The agency must monitor State compliance with program rules, provide funds for meals served and related State and local administrative expenses, and provide technical assistance and nutrition education. Financial management staff must issue letters of credit to the States.

Regional Office staff are needed to review and approve applications for program sponsors and to monitor State operations directly. Regional Office staff must also conduct administrative funding evaluations, audits, and management evaluations.

The agency requires research funds to measure SFSP participation as a percent of NSLP free/reduced-price participation and to measure the nutritional quality of SFSP meals.

Resources are required to develop and maintain related internal FCS automated systems that support program administration in this area, and to underwrite the FCS share for any State systems which qualify for Federal financial participation. Resources are also needed to train FCS employees in carrying out their responsibilities for initiatives in the above areas, as streamlining and changing program requirements force the agency to continually evaluate how to most efficiently perform its work.

■ Key External Factors Affecting Goal Achievement

The ability of FCS to achieve these objectives will be affected by several factors. Both the amount of funding provided to the program and legislative changes in rate structures may affect the number of low-income children participating the SFSP. In turn, this will affect the ability of FCS to reach these children with food and nutrition programs. In addition, decreased research funding may jeopardize the agency's ability to measure program performance and results.

■ Partnerships and Coordination

In most States SFSP is administered by the State education agency or other public service agency. They are responsible for recruiting and monitoring sponsors and providers. The agency cooperates with advocacy groups in working to improve targeting and the quality of meals provided.

Within USDA, FCS works with FSIS to improve food safety at SFSP sites.

■ Program Evaluation

Objective 1 of this goal focuses on increasing program participation. FCS is conducting, or has conducted, several studies that examine issues of program access that could lead to increased program participation. The SFSP is a major focus of the Geomapping study. This study examines the location of providers in several programs and their proximity to and access by those eligible for the program. The agency also addressed access issues in a 1989 demonstration that allowed private, nonprofit sponsors to participate in the program in order to expand the number of providers available to children. The demonstration indicated that the addition of private, nonprofit sponsors could indeed expand program access and, therefore, children's participation. However, FCS does not have, and does not plan to have, any direct measure of these objectives in the foreseeable future due to funding constraints.

Goal 6

Improved quality of food distribution commodities and service

A key emphasis of FCS is to promote the health of FCS program participants by improving the nutritional profile of USDA commodity offerings, while maintaining the Department's support for domestic agricultural markets. Commodity assistance programs primarily provide commodities for soup kitchens, food banks, and emergency feeding organizations. These organizations typically serve some of the most vulnerable populations. In addition, commodities are provided to school nutrition programs. While improving the nutritional profile of commodities, FCS also supports the Department's search for opportunities to improve customer service and streamline administration.

One of FCS' goals is to improve the healthfulness of the commodities distributed by both increasing the quantity of foods that promote the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, as well as improving the nutritional profile of other types of commodities. Toward this end, FCS will need the cooperation of AMS and FSA to identify and purchase healthful foods.

■ Legislative Authority

National School Lunch Act of 1946, as amended (P.L. 79-396)

Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973, as amended (P.L. 93-86)

Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983, as amended (P.L. 98-8)

Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended (P.L. 95-113)

■ Objective 6.1

Distribute commodities that support the nutrition objectives of FCS programs (TEFAP, FDPIR, CSFP, NSLP).

Time Frame for Completion

The time required is 5 years.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Add, modify, or delete foods from the foods-available list provided to commodity customers to achieve a more healthful overall mix of commodity offerings.
- Continue to maintain the list of commodities available for each program and periodically identify the need to make changes.

Performance Measures

- Nutritional profile of commodities
Baseline: To be developed
Target: To be established
- Food packages support nutrition recommendations and the Food Guide Pyramid. (Yes/no measurement)
Baseline: Under development (Assessment of household food packages by agency technical staff)
Target: Food packages conform to nutrition recommendations and Food Guide Pyramid

■ Objective 6.2

Improved program efficiency.

FCS will continue its efforts to reduce paperwork and attempt to automate processes where applicable. Further, the agency plans to improve inventory control and on-time delivery of commodities. Achieving this objective will require working cooperatively with the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Farm Service Agency to improve services such as delivery and resolution of commodity complaints.

Time Frame for Completion

The time required is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Implement enhanced software support and ongoing technical assistance that allows for expansion of the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system used by State distribution agencies.
- Identify other current business functions that are not automated and modify as needed.
- Revise requirements for monitoring, record keeping, and reporting imposed by FCS on State and local agencies and take action to reduce them.

Performance Measures

- Number of business functions that are automated, including Processed Commodity Inventory Management System functions
Baseline: Under development
Target: To be developed
- Percent reduction in Federal and State inventories.
Baseline: Under development
Target: To be developed
- Number of States distributing agents using the Electronic Data Interchange
Baseline: 23 (1997)
Target: 50 (2002)

■ Objective 6.3

Improved service for commodity customers.

Time Frame for Completion

The estimated time required is 5 years.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Work with AMS and FSA to improve the predictability of delivery and receipt of orders to schools.
- Develop and implement improved means of periodic communication with commodity customers.
- Periodically survey customer satisfaction with commodities and implement improvements as appropriate.

Performance Measures

- Proportion of customers satisfied with food distribution services
Baseline: Under development
Target: To be developed
- Percent of deliveries that are shipped and received within the specified time-frames
Baseline: Under development.
Target: To be developed

■ Objective 6.4**Support the USDA gleaning initiative for foods used in the FCS feeding programs and/or distributed by FCS programs.**

Gleaning allows for apparently wholesome food or grocery products to be donated by the owner for free distribution to the needy or for donation to a nonprofit organization for distribution to the needy.

Time Frame for Completion

The time required is indefinite.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Coordinate with Department's activities.
- Inform States that administrative funds can be used for gleaning.

Performance Measures

- Percent/number of SFAs that glean food
Baseline: To be developed
Target: To be developed
- Incidence of gleaning by emergency food organizations
Baseline: To be developed
Target: To be developed

Linkage of Goal to Annual Performance Plan

Goal 6, Improved Quality of Food Distribution Commodities and Service, comprised four strategic objectives. FCS analyzed these four objectives and used the results to develop 11 annual performance goals representing what the agency plans to achieve during fiscal year 1999. Performance goals for subsequent years will build on this initial achievement. Goal 6 is linked to the budget program activity of the Food Distribution Program.

Resources Needed

FCS staff are needed to act on behalf of the Department in administering this program. FCS must provide assistance to distributing agencies and evaluate all levels of program operations to assure that the goals of the program are achieved in the most effective and efficient manner possible. FCS must develop and issue guidance and instructions which must be followed by distributing agencies. Regional Office staff work with State distribution agents to identify food distribution needs. FCS coordinates the necessary food buys with the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Farm Service Agency.

Resources are required to develop and maintain related internal FCS automated systems, such as the Processed Commodities Inventory Management System (PCIMS) and

EDI, and to underwrite the FCS share for any State systems which qualify for Federal financial participation. Resources are also needed to train FCS employees in carrying out their responsibilities for initiatives in the above areas, as streamlining and changing program requirements force the agency to continually evaluate how to most efficiently perform its work.

Resources will be needed to obtain measures of program performance for Objective 1, of distributing commodities that support nutrition objectives of FCS programs.

■ Key External Factors Affecting Goal Achievement

Achievement of these objectives is dependent upon several factors over which USDA has little control. First, improvement of the USDA commodity nutritional profile will partially depend upon the scientific ability of the food industry to produce products that meet USDA specifications for health. Secondly, USDA commodity offerings are dependent on market availability and price, and in many cases must support surplus removal and price support objectives.

■ Partnerships and Coordination

FCS coordinates with the Farm Service Agency and the Agricultural Marketing Service in the selection and purchasing of commodities. The agency works closely with State and local food distribution agencies to streamline program information by automating business functions.

■ Program Evaluation

FCS will use several mechanisms to measure the agency's performance on the Food Distribution Program (FDP) goal and objectives. FCS surveys States annually to determine the acceptability of the commodities provided. These past surveys will provide the baseline measurement for Objective 3. Additionally, when new products are distributed, USDA often pilot-tests these products at a limited number of sites. Program cooperators are then asked about the acceptability of the commodities. This information will be used as additional measures of Objective 3.

The Commodity Improvement Council is composed of several USDA agencies. A review of the USDA commodity nutritional profiles directed by the Council indicated that a significant number of commodities could be modified to meet the *Dietary Guidelines*. This review will be used, where appropriate, as a baseline measure for Objective 1.

Management Initiatives

These initiatives reflect the agency's commitment to quality administrative and financial services, delivered through a capable and well-trained staff. For the agency to be able to fulfill its mission, it must continually maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of its human, financial, procurement, physical, and information resources. In addition, the agency is committed to providing equality of opportunity for its employees, promoting an organizational culture that values individual differences, and assuring fairness in the delivery of its program benefits.

Maximum achievement of FCS' initiatives requires that mission area administrative and management functions support program goals. These support function areas include financial management, administration, and information technology. FCS, therefore, will work with Departmental offices (such as the OCFO, the CIO, and OBPA) in supporting an overall integrated approach for the Department.

FCS' administrative and financial support functions support both FCS and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.

■ Management Initiative 1

Continually improve the quality, effectiveness, and diversity of the FCS workforce.

Time Frame for Completion

Ongoing

Strategies for Achieving the Management Initiative

- Continually improve the FCS workforce by selecting and retaining top-quality individuals, and improving employees' skills.
- Continually improve the diversity of the FCS workforce.
- Continually improve the skills of the FCS workforce by developing and executing a Central Training Plan reflecting the agency's employee development priorities.
- Improve the effectiveness of the FCS workforce by improving the physical work environment.
- Implement the agency Infrastructure Modernization initiative throughout FCS to ensure that Headquarters, Regions, and Field Offices have updated technology tools that are supported by state-of-the-art hardware; and continue to review and streamline existing processes as appropriate.
- Improve overall FCS communications capabilities by upgrading and enhancing the telecommunications infrastructure, ensuring its compatibility with Department-wide USDA information technology.

Performance Measures

- Retention of new employee cohort for first 2 years, followed by comparison of average performance rating of new employee cohort with average performance rating of all employees, for next 3 years
Baseline: To be developed
Target: To be developed
- Percent of agency employees who have Agency-standard desktop hardware and software and are trained in their use
Baseline: 78% hardware and software saturation; 68% training
Target: 98% in both areas
- Percent of minorities and women in senior-level positions
Baseline: Fiscal year 1996 FCS work force profile, GS-13 and above
Target: Civilian labor force percentage
- Extent of diversification in pools of applicants for all job selections
Baseline: To be developed
Target: To be developed

■ Management Initiative 2

Maintain continued fairness in FCS program delivery.

Time Frame for Completion

Ongoing

Strategies for Achieving the Management Initiative

- Ensure that the agency's programs use uniform civil rights standards and procedures that result in timely, consistent, and effective enforcement of all applicable civil rights requirements.

- Implement a Complaint Prevention Program.
- Improve the handling of complaint inquiries, in order to streamline decision making in the Department's civil rights compliance and enforcement functions.

Performance Measures

- Number of complaints with merit filed with FCS
Baseline: 427
Target: No increase, after proportional adjustments are made reflecting participation changes
- Timeliness of disposition
Baseline: 90 days
Target: 60 days
- Number of appeals
Baseline: 2
Target: No increase, after proportional adjustments are made reflecting participation changes

■ **Management Initiative 3**

Users have accurate, timely, financial data available for decision making.

Time Frame for Completion

Ongoing

Strategies for Achieving the Management Initiative

- Successfully implement FCS' agency application of the Department-wide Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS).
- Implement new or revised Department and Government-wide financial standards and policies.
- Improve data integrity.
- Enhance budget development process and presentation.

Performance Measures

- Unqualified opinion on the Financial Statement Audit
Baseline: Disclaimer (1994)
Target: Unqualified Opinion
- FCS' agency application of the Department-wide Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) is successful.

■ **Linkage of Goals to Annual Performance Plan**

There are three financial and administrative support initiatives which were analyzed and broken down into nine annual performance goals for FY 1999. The annual performance goals will lead to the attainment of the three initiatives. FCS derived the annual performance goals directly from the strategic plan after an analysis of what outcomes, activities, and outputs were needed to achieve the initiatives.

■ **Resources Needed**

FCS needs sufficient administrative support staff at the headquarters and regional levels to ensure the integrity of billions of Federal dollars, and to support the FCS workforce so that the effectiveness and efficiency of program delivery are maximized.

The FCS administrative appropriation provides Federal operating expenses for the agency's nutrition assistance programs. This administrative appropriation represents less than one-third of 1 percent of the agency's total budget authority. FCS represents more than 70 percent of the budget of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, yet it employs fewer than 2 percent of the USDA workforce.

Since 1980, FCS has downsized from 2,762 staff years to 1,740 staff years (more than a 35% reduction). In order to maintain program integrity, keep pace with new legislation (such as Welfare Reform, the Healthy Meals for Healthy Americans Act, GPRA, GMRA, FFMIA, FMFIA, and the CFO Act), and create a workforce that can produce more with less, efficient use of human and financial resources is required.

Management and financial management staff are needed to:

- Develop and monitor the agency's budget;
- Manage all contracts, small purchases, and grants;
- Provide accounting services and control of agency funds;
- Provide human resource services, and manage labor management and employee relations activities;
- Assure the collection and reporting of accurate financial and program data;
- Provide and maintain office space, supplies, and furniture;
- Obtain and maintain computer hardware, software, and telecommunication services;
- Develop systems and operations that will improve data and resource integrity, as well as comply with Departmental and Government-wide policies and systems;
- Assure fairness in the delivery of FCS programs; and
- Improve the quality, effectiveness, and diversity of the FCS workforce.

In addition to the above ongoing activities, existing resources will be allocated to carry out the Strategies under this goal. However, additional resources will be required to fully achieve these objectives. Additional staff and funding are required to develop and execute a Central Training Plan reflecting the agency's employee development priorities and to complete the Agency Infrastructure Modernization initiative.

Increased need for financial statement oversight by FCS Regional and Headquarters program personnel as well as by State and local personnel is extensive. The ability of FCS, State, and local governments to obtain resources to provide this oversight is not likely. A number of Federal departments are being faced with this same issue. OMB is addressing the issue but near-term solutions are not likely. FCS is doing everything possible to overcome these resource deficiencies.

■ Key External Factors Affecting Initiative Achievement

Achievement of these initiatives is dependent upon several factors over which FCS has little control, e.g., Congressional appropriations, Office of Management and Budget streamlining directives, Departmental restrictions and imposed costs, regulatory reform, rapid technology change, and environmental and safety and health requirements.

The major outside determinant of FCS's receiving an unqualified opinion from USDA's OIG is accounts receivable. Accounts receivable represent principally claims against households that have been over-issued food stamp benefits. States are responsible for determining participant eligibility, benefit distribution, tracking, collecting, and reporting food stamp recipient claims. States report quarterly household claims summary information to FCS on the status of claims and collection amounts.

OIG has found some deficiencies in several State and local food stamp recipient claims reporting systems. This presents a problem which is to a large extent out of FCS' direct control. FCS is dependent on the State and local agencies and their ability to report accurate and reliable information.

Because FFIS is a Department-wide effort, the successful implementation of this system is largely under the Department's control.

■ Partnerships and Coordination

FCS works closely with the USDA Office of the Chief Financial Officer to coordinate implementation of Department-wide and Government-wide financial standards, policies, procedures, and systems.

FCS works closely with the USDA Office of Budget and Policy Analysis and the Office of Management and Budget to formulate the Department's budget submission to OMB and Congress.

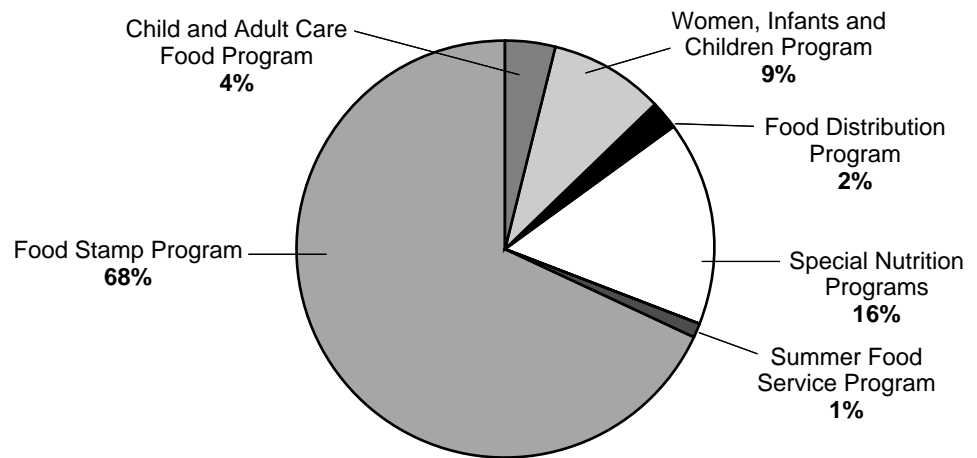
FCS works closely with the USDA Office of Inspector General to ensure the integrity of FCS financial statements.

■ Program Evaluation

For many years, FCS has analyzed program, fiscal, and administrative data and work processes to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies, procedures, and systems. This work has led to the development of improved systems, such as the Agency Financial Management System, the Food Stamp Program Integrated Information System, the Special Nutrition Programs Integrated Information System, the Automated Funds Control System, the National Data Bank, and the forthcoming Department-wide Foundation Financial Information System. These systems, coupled with revised administrative and financial procedures, help to manage the financial and administrative data of the agency, and have provided baseline data that will contribute to further effectiveness and improvement in years to come. In addition, a new Employee Work Life Survey, first distributed to FCS employees nationwide in the first quarter of fiscal year 1997, provides baseline data against which future progress can be measured.

Such baseline data, and new data as it is collected—in tandem with independent audits and customer surveys—will allow FCS to assess the effectiveness of its financial and administrative services. FCS will use the data to measure and evaluate its operations and move in the direction of more effective and efficient support for agency decision-making related to this goal.

FCS Fiscal Year 1997 Program Budget Resources.....



The chart above provides a breakdown of the Food and Consumer Service fiscal year 1997 program budget resources. FCS administers 15 food assistance programs, the majority of which are entitlement programs with mandatory funding levels. This chart represents food assistance program funding decisions by Congress. It does not reflect executive branch management decisions.

